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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

AVENGERS®

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STILL $1.50

THE CROSSING

INTRODUCING THE WASP?!?!

BY

HARRAS

KAVANAGH

RAAB

DEODATO

PALMER

A REALM OUTSIDE OF TIME...

HE CAN'T HELP BUT THINK ABOUT HER CHILDHOOD.

whhhrrrr

A TIME OF PERSONAL DISCOVERY...

...OF ENLIGHTENMENT.

shhhzzzzaak

...AND AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF PEACE.

Aaaaaahhhh!!!

BZZZZZ

BUT DESPITE ALL THAT HE MIGHT RECALL OF THAT BYGONE ERA, THE PLEASURABLE MEMORY IS FLEETING...

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...AND THE PAINFUL REALITY IS ETERNAL!

YEEEAARRGGHH!

HE HAD ONCE BELIEVED HIS NAME TO BE SLADE TRUMAN.

HE HAD ONCE BELIEVED HIMSELF TO BE A HERO--

--A MEMBER OF THE SUPER HERO TEAM KNOWN AS FORCE WORKS.

YET WHAT THE MAN CALLED MOONRAKER HAD ONCE BELIEVED IS OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE.

FOR AS HE HAS SO AGONIZINGLY DISCOVERED--

--IT IS WHAT MANTIS CHOOSES TO BELIEVE THAT MATTERS!

YOU DESERVE EACH AND EVERY MOMENT OF THIS HELL--

--FATHER.

CERTAINLY THE PRIESTS OF PAMA DID NOT INTEND FOR THEIR PACIFIST TEACHINGS TO BE SPAT UPON LIKE THIS, MANTIS...

SHE IS THE CELESTIAL MADONNA--THE CHOSEN MOTHER OF THE FORETOLD CELESTIAL MESSIAH.

HE IS A TIMELORD--THE ONCE-UNDISPUTED MONARCH OF A KINGDOM CURRENTLY UNDER SIEGE.

YOU SPEAK AS IF THEIR WAYS WERE ONCE THIS ONE'S KANG--

--AND YOU ARE GREATLY MISTAKEN.

THEIRS IS AN ALLIANCE FAR FROM AMICABLE.

THIS ONE'S LIFE HAS EVER BEEN--AND EVER SHALL BE--THIS ONE'S OWN.

YOU'D DO WELL TO REMEMBER THAT...

Stan Lee PRESENTS THE MIGHTY AVENGERS IN:

BAD BLOOD

BOB HARRAS & TERRY KAVANAGH PLOT
BEN RAAB SCRIPT • MIKE DEODATO PENCILS
TOM PALMER INKS • JANICE CHIANG LETTERER
FRANK LOPEZ COLORIST • MALIBU COLOR SEPARATIONS
RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR • MARK GRUENWALD EDITOR IN CHIEF

"THEN YOU'D DO YOURSELF A *GREATER SERVICE* IN REMEMBERING THAT I HAVE *EVER* BEEN THE *MASTER* OF THIS *EXTRA-TEMPORAL REALM.*

"AND I SWEAR TO YOU--

"--BY ALL I HOLD SACRED--

"--THAT I WILL *DIE* BEFORE I ALLOW ANY OF YOUR *BROOD* TO USURP THAT POSITION!"

MEANWHILE...

WITHIN THE DARKEST BOWELS OF THE ROYAL PALACE...

...AS MOONRAKER AWAITS THE INEVITABLE STING OF DEATH'S ICY KISS...

WHO-- WHO'S THERE?

IS THIS THE END... *FINALLY...?*

THIS IS *NOT* THE END *GUSTAV BRANDT.* NOT YET AT LEAST.

...YOU'RE HERE TO TORTURE ME... MY DAUGHTER SENT YOU...

NO-- I'M A *FRIEND.* I'VE COME TO *HELP* YOU.

HERE! DRINK THIS...

NEVER HOPED... TO TASTE... *WATER* AGAIN...

DRINK WHAT YOU CAN. I'M GETTING YOU OUT OF HERE *AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.*

WHY... ARE YOU... *HELPING...* ME?

LIKE I SAID-- I'M A *FRIEND.*

AND I NEED TO MAKE CERTAIN THE AVENGERS UNDERSTAND WHAT MUST BE DONE *NEXT.*

Gaaah!

YOU *REALLY* THINK...I'D BETRAY THE AVENGERS... TO THAT WITCH?!?

PLEASE... LEAVE THEM *ALONE...*

...I *SWEAR* TO YOU... THEY KNOW *NOTHING* MORE...

NOT A *THREAT* TO YOU...

I'D *RATHER* YOU KILL ME *NOW...*

...GET IT *OVER* WITH...

...SPARE ME ANY MORE *SHAME...*

I'M SORRY YOU'VE *HAD* TO ENDURE THIS.

I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE BRANDT'S *OWN DAUGHTER--*

--THE CHILD OF HIS *FLESH AND BLOOD--*

--WOULD BE SO CRUEL AS TO DO THIS TO SOMEONE--

--TO *ANYONE--*

--*ESPECIALLY* HER FATHER.

THAT'S IT.

THIS ENDS *NOW.*

IN THE PALACE, ABOVE...

DON'T PRESUME THAT YOU HAVE GARNERED ANY FAVOR IN MY EYES--

--BY ALLOWING ME TO *TORTU*--

THERE'S BEEN A *BREAKOUT.*

"IT APPEARS SOMEONE HAS *LIBERATED* YOUR FATHER--

DEET DEET DEET

THE SECURITY ALARM!

WELL...LOOK WHO'S FINALLY SHOWN HER *TRUE COLORS, MALACHI.*

"--ALBEIT *TEMPORARILY.*"

INDEED, *TOBIAS.* FATHER WILL BE MOST *GRATEFUL* FOR THE "REMOVAL" OF THIS *TURNCOAT* FROM HIS ELITE CORPS--

--AND THIS POX UPON THE ROYAL HOUSE!

LORD KANG'S DIRECTIVES WERE CLEAR, YOUNGLINGS.

SHE IS TO BE *TERMINATED,* POST HASTE--

--WITH EXTREME PREJUDICE!

NO! I'VE COME TOO FAR FOR THIS TO END NOW!

IF THE UPGRADES I INSTALLED INTO MY TIME-CHAIR ARE ON-LINE AND OPERATIONAL--

--THEN WE JUST MIGHT HAVE A RIDE OUT OF HERE!

IT'S GONNA BE TOUGH DODGING ALL THOSE LASER BLASTS WITH AN UNCONSCIOUS PASSENGER IN TOW--

--SO I'VE GOTTA TIME THIS LEAP--

--PERFECTLY!

SSSHHHZZZZ

SHE MUST NOT MAKE A CROSSING! KILL HER!

READY OR NOT, PLANET EARTH--

ZZZAARK

ZZZAARRK

--HERE WE COME!

NOOOOOO!!

FAAATHEERRR!!!

SOUTHAMPTON, LONG ISLAND.

ONCE A STATELY SHORESIDE MANOR, THE SUMMER HOME OF JANET VAN DYNE--

AKA THE WINSOME WASP--

--HAD BEEN DAMAGED THANKS TO THE AVENGERS' RECENT BATTLE WITH THEIR FORMER COMRADE-IN-ARMS--*

--TONY STARK, THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN.

*SEE AVENGERS #393.-- IRON RALF

UNFORTUNATELY, THANKS TO STARK'S **BETRAYAL**, THE HOUSE IS NOT THE ONLY CASUALTY OF WAR...

DR. HENRY PYM-- THE AVENGER KNOWN AS **GIANT-MAN**-- HAS NOT LEFT THIS CHAIR FOR HOURS.

HE HAS NOT SLEPT.

HE HAS HARDLY EATEN.

AND EVEN THOUGH FATIGUE HAS WORN HIM TO THE BRINK OF EXHAUSTION--

--HE REFUSES TO END HIS VIGIL FOR THE COCOON-ENSHROUDED WASP.

HE WILL SAVE THIS WOMAN HE HAS ALWAYS LOVED MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF--

--NO MATTER WHAT THE COST TO **HIS** SOUL--

fsss

fsss

fsss

OR AS HE IS ABOUT TO DISCOVER--

--TO HERS...

UPSTAIRS, GIANT-MAN'S FELLOW AVENGERS--

QUICKSILVER...

...CRYSTAL...

...VISION...

...HERCULES...

...AND THEIR ERSTWHILE ALLY, MASQUE--

...BLACK WIDOW...

--BRING THE BLACK PANTHER UP-TO-SPEED ABOUT IRON MAN'S BETRAYAL OVER A MAKESHIFT COMM-LINK...

THIS IS DISTURBING NEWS--

--MOST DISTURBING, INDEED.

SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE GOT SOME INFORMATION FOR US AS WELL, T'CHALLA.

I DO. I ASSUME YOU RECOGNIZE THIS--?

THIS IS THE DATA OF STARK'S ARCTIC BUNKER WE DOWNLOADED FROM THE VISION'S OPTICAL RECEPTORS...*

NOW, AS MUCH AS I PLACE MY FAITH IN THE COLLECTIVE EXPERTISE OF WAKANDA'S BEST AND BRIGHTEST SCIENTISTS, TECHNICIANS AND TACTICIANS.

*RECORDED IN IRON MAN #234.-- ROBO-RALF

--WITHOUT MORE TIME, EVEN THEIR INTELLECT COMBINED WITH MY OWN MAY NOT BE UP TO THE TASK.

FOR WE ARE DEALING WITH ANTHONY STARK, MY FRIENDS.

AND INSANE THOUGH HE MAY HAVE BECOME, STARK IS STILL--

--A CONSUMMATE GENIUS.

WELL, THAT'S *NOT QUITE* WHAT I WAS *HOPING* TO HEAR...

THANKS, T'CHALLA-- LET US KNOW IF ANYTHING DEVELOPS.

I SHALL, PANTHER OUT...

THE *MEMORY* ESCAPES ME *STILL.*

IT'S BURIED INSIDE MY *HEAD,* SOMEWHERE, WAITING TO BE UNEARTHED.

THAT *COULDN'T* HAVE BEEN OUR *LAST OPTION.* THERE'S JUST GOT TO BE *ANOTHER...*

...SOMEWHERE.

I SAW SOMETHING-- EXPERIENCED SOMETHING-- THAT I *MUST* TELL THE OTHERS...

...BUT WHAT WAS IT?

CAN WE PLEASE STOP EXPLORING *DEAD ENDS--*

--AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT STARK ALREADY?!?

IF WE FIND *HIM*--THEN WE'LL FIND MY *DAUGHTER!*

PLEASE, HON-- YOU'VE GOT TO *CALM DOWN.*

"CALM DOWN," CRYSTAL--?

--WHILE OUR *ONLY CHILD* MAY BE THE PRISONER OF A *HOMICIDAL MANIAC?*

WE *DON'T* KNOW THAT FOR SURE--

ODDLY ENOUGH-- I TRUST THAT LUNA IS SAFE WITH *TUC.*

DON'T ASK ME WHY, BUT SOMETHING TELLS ME HE'S *NOT* IN LEAGUE WITH IRON MAN.

AND NO MATTER *WHERE* THEY MAY BE--

--AT LEAST HE'S KEEPING HER FAR AWAY FROM THIS *NIGHTMARE...*

FFZZZ

AVENGERS--YOU'VE GOT TO *HELP* ME!

THE MAN IS IN *DIRE* NEED OF *MEDICAL ATTENTION!*

--SSSHZOWWW

WHO THE--?!

THE UNCONSCIOUS MAN IS *UNFAMILIAR* TO ME, QUICKSILVER--

--BUT I DO RECOGNIZE THE GIRL.

SHE SPIRITED THE TWINS--*TOBIAS* AND *MALACHI*--AWAY DURING THEIR ABDUCTION OF THE COTATI.*

A WARNING, AVENGERS--

--GIVEN HER ASSOCIATION TO THE TWO YOUTHS WHO ATTACKED THE SWORDSMAN AND MYSELF--

--I WOULD VENTURE A GUESS THAT HER INTENTIONS ARE LESS THAN HONORABLE.

NO! DO *NOT* ATTACK HER!

SHE'S HERE TO *HELP!*

I *REMEMBER* NOW--*SHE* WAS THE ONE WHO TRIED TO *WARN* ME ABOUT STARK!**

AND NOW YOU KNOW *WHY.*

BUT IF YOU DO NOT DO SOMETHING FOR *THIS* MAN *IMMEDIATELY*--

IT SEEMS THE *BEST* THING WE COULD DO FOR HIM--

--IS TO GET HIM AWAY FROM *YOU!*

NO--I'M ONLY TRYING TO *HELP!*

TOO *LITTLE*, TOO *LATE*! WOULDN'T YOU SAY, GIRL?

NOW, UNLESS YOU *ENJOY* THE SENSATION OF *ELECTRICITY*--

--COURSING THROUGH YOUR *BRAIN*, I'D--

PLEASE--NO...MORE...

...TIME...

*AVENGERS #392. --CO-RALF

**IN *AVENGERS: THE CROSSING*. --REMINDER RALF

LATER IN THE MED-LAB...

...THE AVENGERS' GUEST FINALLY AWAKENS FROM UNCONSCIOUSNESS...

SOME TEA, MISS?

IT DOES WONDERS FOR THE NERVES.

THANK YOU, JARVIS. YOU'RE VERY KIND.

AGON'S BONES--THERE'S SOMETHING SO FAMILIAR ABOUT THAT GIRL.

BUT WHAT IS IT?

I'VE NEVER SEEN CRYSTAL SO... UNSETTLED...BY ANYONE LIKE SHE IS BY THIS GIRL.

WHO CAN SHE BE?

THIS MAN IS LUCKY TO HAVE SURVIVED THIS LONG.

WHILE THOSE LESIONS ON HIS BACK AND STOMACH ATTEST TO EXTENSIVE ELECTRICAL ABUSE--

--THE PUSTULES ON HIS WRISTS AND ANKLES INDICATE EXPOSURE TO SEVERE CONCENTRATIONS OF RADIATION ALL ACROSS THE SPECTRUM.

IT'S GOING TO TAKE A SMALL MIRACLE TO SAVE HIM...

AND AS GIANT-MAN WORKS FEVERISHLY TO SAVE HIS NEWLY-ARRIVED PATIENT...

...HE IS TOTALLY UNAWARE OF THE STRANGE EVENTS BEGINNING TO UNFOLD--

--BOTH ACROSS THE ROOM--

--AND IN THE SKY ABOVE!

TARGET ACQUIRED, SIR.

INITIATING LIFE-SIGN SCANS. SWEEPING CLOCKWISE AT ALL CURRENT TEMPORAL LOCI.

WELL? IS SHE HERE--?

AFFIRMATIVE. WE HAVE CONFIRMATION OF BOTH THE TRAITOR'S AND THE FUGITIVE'S SIGNATURES.

HAVE THEY BEEN ALERTED TO OUR PRESENCE YET?

NEGATIVE.

EXCELLENT...

WE CAN'T STAY HERE--!

WHY NOT?

BECAUSE THE FAMILY WON'T REST UNTIL WE'RE ALL DEAD!

DESPITE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HER ARRIVAL HERE--

--THERE IS SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL ABOUT THIS GIRL...

...SOMETHING HONEST...

...SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL...

WE ARE DIRECTLY ABOVE THE DROP-SITE, SIR.

INFORM OUR LORD THAT WE HAVE CORNERED OUR QUARRY.

TELL HIM THAT THE TRAITOR SHALL NOT ESCAPE HIS RIGHTEOUS VENGEANCE--

--AND THAT THE AVENGERS WILL PESTER HIM NO LONGER!

FOR THE END OF THIS WAR IS NIGH, AND VICTORY SHALL BE DECLARED--

--IN THE NAME OF THE HOUSE OF KANG!

THE DIMINUTIVE NEUT HAS LOYALLY ASSUMED MANY ROLES DURING HIS INDENTURED SERVITUDE TO THE KANG DYNASTIES.

HE HAS BEEN A JUDGE...

...A JURY...

...AND AS THE AVENGERS ARE SO PAINFULLY GOING TO DISCOVER...

...AN EXECUTIONER!

BUT EVEN THOUGH NEUT HAS CAUGHT THEM WITH THEIR GUARD DOWN...

THE EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES...

...ARE NEVER DEFENSELESS!

STWOOSH

THE ENDGAME HAS BEGUN, AVENGERS--

--PREPARE TO DIE!

sfwoosh

sfwoosh

NEUT'S ATTACK IS FAST...

...FURIOUS...

WHOOF!

...AND ABOVE ALL ELSE...

HERCULES!

...CALCULATED.

GO LIMP! I WILL HALT YOUR--

--UGH!

WITH A SINGLE BLOW, HE ELIMINATES THE AVENGERS' STRONGEST MEMBERS...

...CUTTING THEIR OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES SIGNIFICANTLY.

THAT TEARS IT, MIGHTY MITE! I'M GOING TO--

BEEP BEEP BEEP

--EH? THAT ALARM? SOMETHING'S HAPPENING TO THE WA--

KRAK

YOU LACK A WARRIOR'S CONCENTRATION, OAF--

--IT WILL MOST CERTAINLY BE THE KEY TO YOUR UNDOING!

OH, YEAH, LITTLE BOY BLUE--?

WELL, MY ENERGY BLADE TO YOUR BIG, FAT HEAD IS GOING TO BE THE KEY TO YOURS!

STRIKING FROM BEHIND, COWARD?

YOU LACK A WARRIOR'S HONOR, SWORDSMAN.

AND FOR THAT REASON ALONE!

--YOU WILL DIE FIRST!

ZARK

I SHOULD STAY ON THE SIDELINES...

AH, BUT WHO WANTS TO LIVE FOREVER?!?

SHZOW

PLEASE, WOMAN--

SHZAX

--DO NOT WASTE MY TIME!

THIS IS GOING WELL...

HAWKEYE! HIGH FIVE, LOW FIVE--!

THE ARROW SPEEDS TOWARDS ITS TARGET...

WAY AHEAD OF YA, SISTER!

...STEADY...

...PRECISE...

...TOTALLY INEFFECTIVE AGAINST THE LIGHTNING-FAST NEUT!

AH, THE *MISFIT--!*

I SENSE THE *MARTIAL SPIRIT* COURSING THROUGH YOU.

COME THEN, *ALIEN--* LET US DANCE THE WARRIOR'S DANCE TOGETHER--

--TO THE DEATH!

NEUT IS MAKING US LOOK LIKE *RANK AMATEURS!*

WHAT'S WORSE-- HE'S COMPLETELY *DISEMBOWELED* THE SWORDSMAN.

BUT IF I CAN *CAUTERIZE* THE WOUND--

--*STAUNCH* THE BLEEDING--

--AND BRING HIS BODY-TEMPERATURE DOWN LOW ENOUGH TO *SLOW* HIS HEART RATE--

--HE JUST MAY HAVE A *FIGHTING CHANCE...*

...I HOPE.

NEXT...

BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE ROOM...

fswip fswip fswip

...YET ANOTHER SILKEN THREAD BEGINS TO UNRAVEL FROM THE WASP'S COCOON...

...AND ANOTHER...

fswip fswip fswip

...AND ANOTHER...

MASTER QUICKSILVER--?!

SAVE YOURSELF, JARVIS!

WE'LL HANDLE NEUT!

A DARING BOAST, MUTANT.

LET US SEE YOU PROVE IT!

FOR IF YOU DO NOT, I WILL MOST CERTAINLY TAKE THE TRAITOROUS DOGS FROM YOU--

--AS THE FINAL BREATH ESCAPES FROM BOTH YOURS AND YOUR PRECIOUS WIFE'S LIPS!

NO!

GIRL! WAIT!

ZARK

SHE'S HARDLY BREATHING, PIETRO!

HER PULSE IS SO *FAINT*--

--SHE'S *DYING*!

WE'VE GOT TO GET HER OUT OF HERE!

YOU ARE *TOO LATE*, HEROES. *HER* LIFE--

--AND YOURS--

--IS FORFEIT!

NO...NOT THE END...

MUST USE THE *DOOR*...

TEMPORAL PORTAL... TO THE *PAST*...

HA! SHE HAS PAID THE PRICE FOR HER *TREACHERY*!

NOW I ADVISE AGAINST *PRAYING* TO YOUR GODS, AVENGERS--

--FOR UNLESS THEY CAN *DELIVER* YOU FROM AN ENTIRE CONTINGENT OF LORD KANG'S *DEADLIEST ANACHRONAUTS*--

--YOUR *FATE* IS IN MY HANDS NOW!

INFORMATION IN *HERCULES'* MIND...

BE CAREFUL, *MOTHER*... *FATHER*...

...I LOVE YOU *BOTH*...

...SO MUCH...

BUT JUST AS NEUT IS ABOUT TO DELIVER THE KILLING BLOW...

...AND THE EVENTS OF QUICKSILVER'S YOUNG LIFE FLASH BEFORE HIS EYES ONE LAST TIME...

...HE IS GIVEN AN UNEXPECTED SECOND CHANCE!

SHAKA BOOM

SO CLOSE... WAS SO CLOSE...

I BESEECH YOUR FORGIVENESS LORD KANG.

I HAVE FAILED YOU...

...FOR THE LAST TIME...

thud

AND AS THE ARCHITECT OF THE DAY'S TRAGEDY FALLS...

HELLO, PIETRO... CRYSTAL...

DID YOU MISS ME?

...AN OMEN IS BORNE ON NEWLY-SPROUTED WINGS.

SOMETIME LATER...

SO, HANK--? WHAT'S THE *PROGNOSIS?*

OUTSIDE OF THE OBVIOUS *PHENOTYPIC RECONSTRUCTION*, JAN--

YOU'RE IN *PERFECT PHYSICAL HEALTH*--*BETTER* THAN YOU'VE EVER BEEN BEFORE!

I'D SAY YOU'RE GOING TO BE *JUST FINE.*

SO, GIVEN WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM THE *TEENAGE LUNA*--

--AND WHAT THE *IMAGE INDUCER* COULD DISCERN FROM HERCULES' MIND--

--WE NOW HAVE A *MEANS* TO AN *END* IN THE FORM OF THAT *TIME-PORTAL* IN YOUR MANSION'S SUB-BASEMENT.

TRUE. BUT THE *QUESTION* WE MUST STILL ANSWER *FIRST* IS:

WHAT DO WE DO ONCE WE'VE TRAVELED *BACK IN TIME* THROUGH THE DOOR?

WE CAN'T JUST *KILL* TONY STARK--!

NO, WE CAN'T.

BUT THERE IS *SOMEONE* WHO *CAN* *STOP* HIM.

REMEMBER WHAT THE *BLACK PANTHER* SAID ABOUT STARK BEING A "*CONSUMMATE GENIUS*?"

WELL, WHAT BETTER WAY TO *STOP* A GENIUS--

--THAN WITH *ANOTHER GENIUS*?!?

TO BE CONTINUED IN AVENGERS:

TIMESLIDE!

Dear Ralph & Co.,

What do I think of "The Crossing" so far? Well, having seen Yellowjacket, Marilla, and Gilgamesh all kick the can, I can say only one thing: kill some more people! Ha, ha, ha!!!

Ahem. Seriously, though, I think the story is interesting. You have me intrigued about who's behind all this, that's for sure. I also like the new costumes. I'm especially glad that the Black Widow and Quicksilver got them. Natasha's had the same costume for over a decade, and Quicksilver since X-MEN #4, over thirty (gulp!) years ago. By now it must really smell, considering how many years he's worn it.

As for the aforementioned deaths, I have mixed reactions. When Rita DeMara left the Guardians of the Galaxy, I was glad. Since their title was being canceled, she wouldn't fade into obscurity alongside them. What happens instead? She gets killed in her very next appearance. What a waste of a good character. Marilla I will also miss. At first, she was really annoying, but I warmed to her over the last year. As for Gilgamesh, the guy was an Avenger for less than a year, and that was over seventy issues ago. He's made maybe three appearances since then. Unlike most of the Eternals, he was rather lame, so killing him was probably the most merciful thing to do. He I will *not* miss. As for Marilla and Yellowjacket, despite the fact that I liked the characters, please don't pull any cheesy resurrections. Now I dare you to permanently kill a *major* Avenger.

Since I'm discussing a story called "The Crossing," I might as well raise a topic I've been wondering about related to crossing over. Since Marvel broke up into "families" of titles, there's been hardly any crossovers, especially with the mutant titles.

One last thing. Please don't switch to the "better" paper. The cover of #391 reads "still $1.50" and I'd like it to stay at that price for as long as possible. Ciao!

Ben Herman
14 Ramapo Trail
Harrison, NY 10528

You can expect to start seeing more interaction between the books in 1996.

Dear Ralph,

It just doesn't get much better than AVENGERS #391. There was more tension and drama in this one book than in many other titles over the span of a year.

The characterization too was very effective, I found most of all in the case of the Vision. Despite having re-acquired the ability to feel emotions, the Vision still came across as very logical, dominated by analysis; he reacted to the deaths of Marilla and Gilgamesh very differently to the others.

Even those who didn't get much of the spotlight this issue still came across well. Seeing Gilgamesh dying was particularly difficult for Hercules, who is still coming to terms with losing his immortality. It must appear to him now that everything in his world is falling apart, a feeling intensified when the team had to abandon their home.

And after the impact of THE CROSSING, we start getting some clues about what's happening. Neut appears to come from the future (or a future) and the death of Gilgamesh was ordered after Gilgamesh taught the rulers his secrets, then rebelled against them.

As for the art, it's simply excellent. Tom has worked well with Mike's pencils up to now but not until this issue have the two meshed perfectly. The full-bleed art now employed on this title really delivers a punch, too.

So, on to #392. Of course, I'll be there, since this looks like it will be one of the great storylines in the history of AVENGERS. And only eight more issues until #400!

Mark Dito
32 Davies Ave.,
Springwood. 2777
N.S.W. Australia

Dear Assemblers,

Bob Harras has been writing exciting AVENGERS tales for forty issues now. It is his profound familiarity with the true spirit of the team that allows "The Crossing" saga to develop as the most remarkable storyline yet. This order of quality just can't be achieved by writers who only have a couple of stories to tell before moving on. Mr. Harras has my admiration for his devotion to Earth's mightiest.

Where to begin? The clues, the twists, the intrigue...I've always been a big fan of timeline stories. I do hope you explain exactly how Rita DeMara's involvement led to all this. There was that classic suspenseful moment in THE CROSSING where she finds herself at the door of the mansions and you're screaming, "*No! Go away! You were warned!*" and she rings the bell anyway. Not to mention the unimaginable horrors lurking in the basement. Great stuff! I would hazard that the young woman desperate to give warning was an adult Luna. Along with your younger brother, Tuc, and Wanda and Vision's supposedly lost twins, we're going to get a peek at a future generation.

Also well handled was the aftermath of Marilla's death. I was touched by the senselessness of it, the unfairness, and the helplessness of those who searched and waited in vain for her safe recovery. Marilla didn't habitually court death like Gilgamesh. The death of an immortal was shocking in its improbability. Marilla's death just shouldn't have been. Thanks for all the characterization. It is the heart of the book.

Tom has really gotten a handle on Mike's pencils now, or maybe it's the fact that Tom did the color as well as the inks. Ish 391 was incredibly beautiful.

It's no wonder this continues to be my favorite book after more than two decades. Thanks.

Doug Tennant
(Address withheld by request)

NEXT ISSUE

Quick! Go pick up AVENGERS:TIMESLIDE available the first week of December, follow that up with the double-sized IRON MAN #325, and then zip right back here for the mind-blowing conclusion to "The Crossing" featuring among other things, the **death** of an Avenger...

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